



State of Connecticut

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TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Testimony by Representative Pam Sawyer

Environment Committee

House Bill 5417

March 12, 2010 10:30 Room 2B

RE: Trails for All-Terrain Vehicles (Sections 3 & 4)

Good morning Chairmen Meyer and Roy, Ranking Members McKinney and Chapin, and members of the Environment Committee. For the record, I am Representative Pam Sawyer, representing the 55th District. I am here today to speak to Sections 3 and 4 of House **Bill 5417** AAC Open Space And The Creation Of Trails For All-Terrain Vehicles.

The long standing dilemma of **no places for ATV users to ride** is a continual issue for this legislature. We know that there are 11 places in state forests for snowmobilers to ride on state land. But trails in Connecticut are almost exclusively, with rare exception, set aside for hikers.

Legislation was passed in 1986 mandating that the DEP find places for the ATV community to ride. But it did not include a completion date! So 24 years later, the state is caught up in a problem that has no simple answer.

Opening riding areas will accomplish 3 major goals:

- Protecting fragile state lands,
- Reducing the numbers of rogue riders in forests,
- Allow the state to increase the fine significantly on rogue riders (rSB 227)
- Creating riding areas that will have specific trail designations.

An important step down the road must be ATV rider education. That would include important safety AND environmental protection information for the next generation of riders.

Money is always one of the first questions in deliberating how to open places to ride. For background information, currently Connecticut does receive federal dollars for trails. In 47 other states' money from those dollars are partially used for motorized trail usage. However, in our state, we do not.

I would like to thank the committee for taking the time to consider this legislation.